Senate Unit Seeks Review of ITT

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The Senate Judiciary Committee voted unanimously yesterday to refer its massive hearing record on the ITT antitrust case to the Justice Department, to determine whether any witness had committed perjury. The committee told the department to issue a written report on its findings in 30 days.

The committee's probe into the department's decision to settle its antitrust case against ITT, instead of pursuing it through the courts, arose during the hearings earlier this year on the nomination of Richard Kleindienst as Attorney General.

Kleindienst was eventually approved by the committee and confirmed by the Senate, but Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.), believing that the hearing record on the ITT case was full of inconsistencies and contradictions between witnesses, offered a motion yesterday to have the Justice Department look into the record for possible perjury.

Tunney stressed yesterday that he isn't accusing anyone of perjury, but he is said to feel there are several major areas of contradiction that should be examined.

These include:

- Denial by ITT lobbyist Dita D. Beard that she had written a memorandum, linking the ITT settlement to a purported ITT offer to help finance the GOP National Convention. Aides to columnist Jack Anderson told the committee that she had conceded writing the memorandum. Mrs. Beard's testimony and that of her immediate boss, William Merriam, were also felt to be contradictory.

- Conflict between the testimony of ITT President Harold Geneen, who said ITT had offered only a $200,000 guarantee for the convention, and other witness who claimed the figure was $400,000.

- Conflicts in the testimony of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, who is heading the president's re-election campaign, on whether Mitchell knew of the purported ITT offer.

The referral of the hearings to the Justice Department is not unprecedented, but it is not an everyday occurrence, either. It doesn't mean the committee is convinced that perjury has occurred, but only that there are sufficient contradictions for the record to be examined carefully.